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Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7191st meeting
Wednesday, 4 June 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Ms. King
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Ms. Sapag Muñoz de la Peña
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in Russian*): As this is the first meeting of the Security Council in the month of June 2014, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Oh Joon, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, for his service as President of the Council during the month of May. I am sure that I speak on behalf of all members of the Council in expressing my sincere thanks to Ambassador Oh Joon and his team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the work of the Council last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Ms. Valerie Amos.

Ms. Amos: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Council on the humanitarian situation in Somalia.

Since the establishment of the Federal Government of Somalia in 2012, optimism over the expected progress in State- and peacebuilding and political and security improvements have not translated into an improvement in the humanitarian situation. The adoption of resolution 2124 (2013), in support of the joint the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somali National Army military offensive, which resulted in military gains, has not led to a substantial improvement in the daily lives of the people of Somalia.

Development indicators in Somalia remain among the worst in the world. One in seven children dies before his or her first birthday; one in eighteen women dies in childbirth, and only one in three people has access to safe drinking water. Global acute malnutrition levels among internally displaced persons are above global emergency levels of 15 per cent. Approximately 857,000 people in Somalia require urgent and life-saving assistance. An additional 2 million people are on the margin of food insecurity and require continued livelihoods support.

Decades of conflict have displaced over one million people inside Somalia. They are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and susceptible to human rights violations, such as rape. An additional 1 million Somalis continue to seek refuge and protection in neighbouring countries. On Monday, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations issued another alert that a below-average harvest is expected in July and August, partly due to two poor rainy seasons.

The situation is further compounded by the ongoing military offensive and the new Al-Shabaab tactic of blocking major supply routes and encircling newly recovered areas. Al-Shabaab's tactic of encirclement has prevented commercial activity and humanitarian assistance from reaching newly recovered areas. Access to basic commodities is limited and food prices have increased. For instance, the average price of basic items in Waajid, Xuddur and Maxaas in the Bay, Bakool and Hiraan regions have more than doubled. More than 70,000 people have been temporarily displaced as a result of the conflict, significantly disrupting the planting season.

We have carried out assessments in four of the newly recovered towns, as well as in Afgooye and Baidoa. Tens of thousands of people have sought refuge as a result of the offensive in those two locations. The assessments confirm that people have limited access to food, water, primary health care and nutrition supplies. Insecurity has prevented us from assessing the remaining towns.

Humanitarian partners are steadfast in their commitment to assisting the people of Somalia. Funding received so far this year helped us reach over 1 million people with food and livelihoods assistance and 97,000 children were treated for malnutrition. Water and sanitation interventions supported 400,000 people, and 500,000 people benefited from basic health-care services. A massive and well-coordinated vaccination campaign targeting 4 million people in 2013 managed to contain the polio outbreak of May that

year. Unfortunately, one case was confirmed today in Puntland.

Humanitarian workers in Somalia continue to face tremendous challenges in carrying out their work. Large parts of southern and central Somalia, mainly rural areas and the outskirts of the main towns, remain under the control or influence of Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab's ability to disrupt and infiltrate areas under the control of the Somali Federal Government continues to hamper aid delivery, and in some instances has forced agencies to resort to costly air operations. Al-Shabaab has carried out bold and targeted attacks on Government officials, international organizations and humanitarian workers. That is of grave concern, and we are working to enhance measures to mitigate threats against aid workers.

Unpredictable bureaucratic impediments imposed by local and regional administrations, including arbitrary taxation, the payment of registration fees and the need for aid agencies to seek approval for the recruitment of staff, the renting of premises and the choice of national partners often inhibit the ability of agencies to access people in need.

Despite the commitment of the international community to averting another humanitarian disaster in Somalia, financial support is especially low this year. Only 19 per cent of the $933-million humanitarian appeal is funded. Some donors have announced a decrease of their contribution this year, and we expect this will continue into 2015. Remittances, another lifeline for millions of Somalis, are at risk as banks continue to threaten to close Somali money transfer organizations, which are seen as being at high risk for illegal activities.

This limited funding has forced the humanitarian community to cut back on all but the most basic of interventions. There is a great risk that the gains made in the past years will be reversed. For instance, if funding is not secured immediately, UNICEF may suspend primary health-care activities that provide medical services to more than 3 million people. UNICEF has also warned that 50,000 children under the age of five could die from severe malnutrition if funding is not received. Water and sanitation supplies to some settlements for internally displaced persons in Mogadishu have ceased because of lack of funding, and we are receiving reports of increased acute watery diarrhea in these areas.

Somalia remains one of the most complex environments in which to deliver assistance. However, to the extent possible, humanitarian partners are managing rather than avoiding risk in order to be able to continue to deliver critical life-saving programmes. Assistance continues to be delivered through local partners in many parts of Somalia where agencies are not able to operate directly. In limited instances, there have been cases of diversion. However, thanks to the United Nations Risk Management Unit and other monitoring systems, we are now better able to detect risks, evaluate the capacity of our local partners and track programmes with stronger reporting and auditing tools.

Urgent action must be taken to prevent the country from slipping back into a major humanitarian crisis. Early warnings must trigger early action so that Somalia moves towards and not away from food security, that it remains polio-free, and that the resilience of the people is reinforced. We are asking for an immediate injection of $60 million for the next three months to address urgent food, nutrition and health-care needs.

I also ask Security Council members to continue hosting Somali asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, and to ensure their protection and safety; to ensure that refugee returns are voluntary and conducted in a safe and dignified manner; to help us secure additional funding; to work with banks and Somali money transfer operators to put in place a transitional mechanism until a proper financial system is established; and to support ongoing humanitarian initiatives that contribute to predictable, safe and sustained access to affected people.

We need to work together to manage and share the risks involved in continued humanitarian operations. Failure to address humanitarian needs today will not only undermine the peace and State-building gains of the past two years, but will also lead to further crises. We do not want to see a repeat of 2011, when parts of Somalia faced a famine. Somalia must remain a priority for us all.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Amos for her briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.15 p.m.